

Veterinary Practitioner Feedback on Training in Support of the Animal Health Ireland Johnes' Pilot Control Programme

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Introduction

A voluntary pilot control programme for Johnes' Disease (JD) in dairy herds was launched in October 2013 within the Republic of Ireland by Animal Health Ireland (AHI). The core components of the programme are;

- Veterinary On-Farm Risk Assessment and Disease Management Planning (VRAMP) advice carried out on each farm participating in the control programme by AHI trained veterinary practitioners.
- Repeated annual herd screening of individual animals over 2 years of age.
- Herd categorisation based upon the confidence that the herd is infected or infection free.

In support of this, a series of full-day training events were run by AHI to train veterinary practitioners in the disease, its diagnosis, the interpretation of test results and carrying out risk assessments. As part of this, practitioners participating in the training were invited to give feedback on the training.

Materials and Methods

Feedback was sought from 208 vets who attended 11 training events which were held between July and December 2013. Of these, 171 responded to some or all the questions asked. The training schedule for each event is shown in figure 1. The questions asked are listed in table 1.

VRAMP Training Programme

9.30	Registration
10.00	Overview of Infection, its Diagnosis and Control
11.15	Coffee
11.30	Concept of Risk & Overview of the RAMP Process
12.30	Lunch
1.30	Farm Practical
3.30	Coffee
3.45	Review of Practical
4.15	Herd Scenarios & Multiple Choice Quiz
5.00	Finish

Figure 1. Veterinary Practitioner Training Schedule

Question	Answer
1. How relevant were the topics covered?	Not relevant/relevant/very relevant
2. How relevant was the content?	Not relevant/relevant/very relevant
3. Did you feel that the training has added to your knowledge of these topics? •The Disease and its Transmission •Tests for Johnes' disease •The Risk Assessment Process •Ability to carry out VRAMPS	Score 1-7 (1 strongly disagree/ 7 strongly agree)
5. Would you attend a similar event organised by Animal Health Ireland?	Yes/No
6. Other course topics you would like covered relating to Johnes' Disease	Free text
7. Other course topics you would like covered relating to other AHI disease priority areas	Free text

Table 1. Feedback questions.

Results

125 (88%) of those that gave a response to questions 1 and 2 regarded the topics covered and the content of the training as very relevant. No-one regarded the training or its content as not relevant. The majority of respondents felt that the training had added to their knowledge of the disease, its transmission, testing for the infection and the risk assessment process (figure 2).

167 (99%) of respondents replied that they would be interested in attending a similar event organised by AHI. 55 respondents suggested topics for future JD related training. Of these 29% suggested training for JD in beef herds and 18% on further training on JD testing. 29% expressed an interest in follow-up information on the programme after it had been rolled out (figure 3).

75 respondents suggested topics for non JD related training. The single largest topic requested was for training in IBR (figure 4).

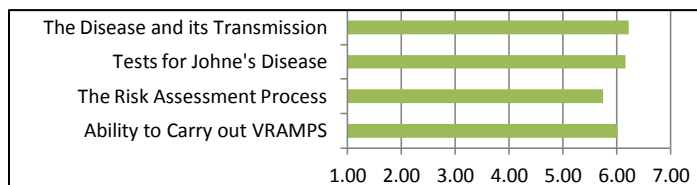


Figure 2. Mean veterinary practitioner assessment training scores from question 3.

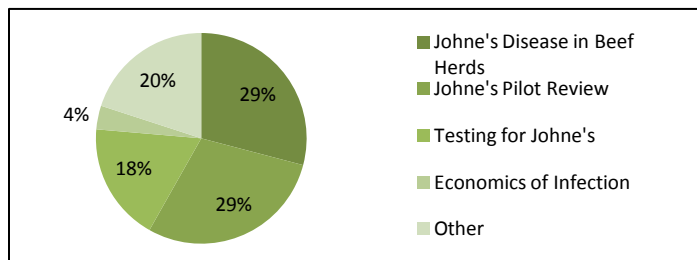


Figure 3. Johnes' Disease related topics suggested for further training

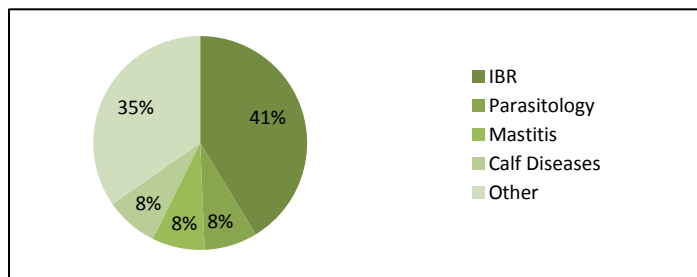


Figure 4. Non Johnes' Disease related topics suggested for further training

Conclusions

- AHI led VRAMP training for veterinary practitioners was very well accepted by participants as an effective method of training for the AHI Johnes' Pilot Programme.
- While the current Pilot Programme focuses on dairy herds there is an expressed interest by Veterinary Practitioners to increase their knowledge to assist with JD control in beef herds.
- JD testing and test interpretation were the highest priority areas for further JD related training.
- The level of interest amongst participants to receive feedback on the progress of the programme indicated a high level of engagement from practitioners in it.
- The non-JD related topic that participating practitioners were most interested in gaining additional training in was IBR.